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Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 7th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 11 October 2006, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Acharya ..... (Nepal)
later: Ms. Bolaños-Perez (Vice-Chairperson) ..... (Guatemala)

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* Items which the Committee has decided to consider together.

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06-56349 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

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1. **The Chairman** invited the Chairman to take action on the draft resolutions and draft decisions relating to agenda items 35, 36, 37, 38 and 39.

2. He took it that the Committee agreed to defer considerations of the draft resolution on the question of Western Sahara to the next meeting in order to allow time for further consultations.

3. *It was so decided.*

4. *Draft resolution I on Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 e of the Charter of the United Nations* (A/61/23, chap. XII).

5. **The Chairman** said that the Secretariat had informed him that draft resolution I had no financial implications.

6. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Gabon, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

None.

Abstaining:

France, Israel, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

7. *Draft resolution I was adopted by 139 votes to none, with 3 abstentions.**

* The delegation of Cuba subsequently informed the Committee that it had intended to vote in favour of the draft resolutions.

8. **Ms. Alam** (United Kingdom) said that, as in previous years, her country had abstained in the vote on the draft resolution. It did not take issue with the main objective of the resolution, which was to seek compliance with Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations, and would continue to meet its obligations fully in that regard with respect to the United Kingdom Overseas Territories. However, her delegation believed that the decision as to whether a Non-Self-Governing Territory had reached a level of self-government sufficient to relieve the administering Power of the obligation to transmit information under Article 73 *e* of the Charter fell to the government of the Territory and the administering Power concerned, and not to the General Assembly.

Draft resolution II on economic and other activities that affect the interests of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories (A/61/23, chap. XII)

9. **The Chairman** said that the Secretariat had informed him that draft resolution II had no financial implications.

10. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Gabon, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Israel

Abstaining:

France, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

11. *Draft resolution II was adopted by 146 votes to 1, with 2 abstentions.*

12. **Mr. Desmoures** (Argentina) said that his delegation believed that draft resolution II must be interpreted and implemented in conformity with the relevant General Assembly resolutions on decolonization, particularly resolutions 2065 (XX) and 31/49 and subsequent resolutions on the question of the Malvinas.

Draft resolution III on implementation of the Declaration of the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations (A/61/23, chap. XII)

13. **The Chairman** said that the Secretariat had informed him that draft resolution III had no financial implications.

14. **Mr. Severin** (Saint Lucia) said that in paragraph 12 of draft resolution III, the acronym "ECLAC" should be inserted after "Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean", "the Non-Self-Governing Territories that are" should replace "its" before "associate members", and "of ECLAC" should be inserted after "associate members".

15. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

None

Abstaining:

Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Micronesia (Federated States of), Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

16. *Draft resolution III, as orally amended, was adopted by 99 votes to none, with 53 abstentions.*

17. **Ms. Saloranta** (Finland), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that States members of the European Union reaffirmed their support for the specialized agencies in their efforts to offer assistance to Non-Self-Governing Territories in the humanitarian, technical and educational fields. However, the statutes of those agencies must be carefully respected, and for that reason, the European Union had again abstained in the vote on the draft resolution.

18. **Mr. Desmoures** (Argentina) said that his delegation valued and supported the work of the Special Committee and had traditionally voted in favour of draft resolution III because it agreed with its objectives and previous texts had correctly reflected the various aspects of decolonization. However, though his delegation did not object to the resolution as a whole, it believed that paragraphs 12, 13 and 14 did not reflect existing draft resolutions of the Special Committee, the General Assembly or of the Economic and Social Council. The decisions of the Special Committee and the General Assembly must be coherent with all resolutions on decolonization, in particular, Economic and Social Council resolution 2006/37 of 27 July 2006. Therefore, Argentina had abstained in the vote.

Draft resolution A/C.4/61/L.4: Offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories

19. **The Chairman** said that the Secretariat had informed him that draft resolution A/C4/61/L.4 had no financial implications. Egypt had become a sponsor of the draft resolution.

20. *Draft resolution A/C.4/61/L.4 was adopted.*

Draft decision A/C.4/61/L.6 on the question of Gibraltar

21. *Draft decision A/C.4/61/L.6 was adopted.*

Draft resolution IV on the question of New Caledonia (A/61/23, chap. XII)

22. *Draft resolution IV was adopted.*

Draft resolution V on the question of Tokelau (A/61/23, chap. XII)

23. *Draft resolution V was adopted.*

Draft resolution VI on the questions of American Samoa, Anguilla, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Guam, Montserrat, Pitcairn, Saint Helena, the Turks and Caicos Islands and the United States Virgin Islands (A/61/23, chap. XII)

24. **Mr. Severin** (Saint Lucia) said that the sixth preambular paragraph should end after "artefacts and archives" and a new paragraph 6 should be added. The new paragraph would read: "*Welcomes* the cooperation agreements existing between the Territory and Denmark, the former colonial Power of the Territory, on the exchange of artefacts and the repatriation of archival material".

25. *Draft resolution VI, as orally amended, was adopted.*

26. **Mr. Desmoures** (Argentina) recalled that, in accordance with the plan of action for the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, seminars on decolonization could be held only in the Pacific and Caribbean regions and at United Nations Headquarters. The phrase "and other venues" in the twenty-first preambular paragraph of section A of draft resolution VI was therefore inaccurate and inconsistent with the plan of action.

27. With regard to paragraph 2 of section A, his Government reiterated its full support for the right to self-determination of peoples still under colonial domination and foreign occupation, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) and 2625 (XXV). At the same time, it wished to stress that the reference to self-determination in that paragraph was restricted to the Territories mentioned in the draft resolution. Both the General Assembly and the Special Committee on Decolonization recognized that there were colonial Territories to which self-determination did not apply owing to the existence of a dispute over sovereignty. For example, in the special colonial situation in the Malvinas, the principle of territorial integrity should apply, so as to prevent any attempt to disrupt the national unity and territorial integrity of Argentina. That accorded with General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) and 2065 (XX), as well as subsequent resolutions on the question adopted by the General Assembly and the Special Committee.

28. **Ms. Alam** (United Kingdom) said that her delegation had reluctantly joined the consensus on the draft resolution, reflecting its full support for the right of self-determination. However, some of the language used in the resolution was unacceptable. Her delegation was concerned that the paragraphs referring to the United Kingdom's Overseas Territories had become increasingly inaccurate and unrepresentative. It was disappointed that its proposed amendments had not been incorporated in the draft resolution. The reputation of the Special Committee would be further diminished if it continued to disregard the views and comments of the administering Powers.

Draft resolution VII on the dissemination of information on decolonization (A/61/23, chap. XII)

29. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Gabon, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Moldova, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-

Leste, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Israel, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Abstaining:

France.

30. *Draft resolution VII was adopted by 153 votes to 2, with 1 abstention.**

31. **Ms. Alam** (United Kingdom) said that her delegation had voted against the draft resolution because it considered that the obligation imposed on the United Nations to publicize information on decolonization constituted an unwarranted drain on the Organization's scarce resources.

Draft resolution VIII on the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (A/61/23, chap. XII)

32. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Gabon, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Moldova, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Israel, Kiribati, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Abstaining:

Belgium, France, United States of America.

33. *Draft resolution VIII was adopted by 154 votes to 3, with 3 abstentions.*

34. **Ms. Alam** (United Kingdom) said that, despite the fact that it had voted against the draft resolution, some elements of which were unacceptable, her delegation was committed to modernizing its relationship with its Overseas Territories, while fully taking into account the views of the peoples of those Territories.

Agenda item 30: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (A/61/20 and Corr.1)

35. **The Chairman** said that the initiative to establish a United Nations programme on space-based information for disaster management and emergency response was timely. It would enhance international coordination of disaster management and emergency response through greater use of existing space-based services for all countries, as well as facilitating capacity-building and institutional strengthening for disaster management, particularly in developing countries.

* The delegation of Mali subsequently informed the Committee that it had intended to vote in favour of the draft resolution.

36. Space technology had played a crucial role following the destructive natural disasters that had occurred over the past two years. Satellite images had been used to assess the damage and to help rescuers focus their efforts on the areas requiring the most urgent help. Satellite-based communications had also been used extensively to connect the afflicted areas with the outside world, since terrestrial networks had been all but destroyed. Space-based technology solutions had thus undoubtedly proved their potential in assisting with every phase of a disaster cycle, including preparedness, mitigation, response and reconstruction.

37. The proposed United Nations programme would provide a means to meet several of the commitments agreed to at the 2005 World Summit; to implement the Hyogo Declaration and Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters, adopted at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction; to support and strengthen the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa; and to assist developing countries in their efforts to promote and develop national strategies for human resources and for science and technology. The programme could also contribute to other targets, such as helping countries recovering from natural disasters to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and helping developing countries to strengthen their capacities at all levels in order to prepare for and respond rapidly to natural disasters and to mitigate their impact.

38. There were many other areas where space science and technology provided useful tools in the endeavour to overcome the challenges to human development. For example, space applications could contribute to cost-effective water resource management and to the prediction and mitigation of water-related emergencies. In view of the unequal distribution of water resources, space-based solutions to water management were of particular importance to developing countries. Tele-education projects in several countries were bringing high-quality education to students and educators at all levels, including those in remote areas who had no access to schools and universities. Telemedicine made it possible for public health services to be provided for those living in areas with limited health care. Meanwhile, the International Satellite System for Search and Rescue (Cospas-Sarsat) used space technology to assist aviators and mariners in distress around the globe. Cospas-Sarsat currently had 37 member States, representing every continent. Since 1982, it had rescued over 18,000 people in more than 5,000 incidents.

39. The legal regime on outer space safeguarded the orderly conduct of space activities. He welcomed the signature and ratification by a growing number of States of United Nations treaties providing a legal framework for the use of outer space for the benefit of all humankind. In connection with the Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space, opened for signature 20 years ago, the Legal Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space was currently studying the practice of States and international organizations in registering space objects.

40. International cooperation was crucial in ensuring that the benefits of space-science technology reached all countries, particularly developing countries. The United Nations, through the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, played a pivotal role in that regard.

41. **Mr. Brachet** (Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space) said that a number of devastating disasters over the past few years had dramatically exposed the vulnerability of human communities to the forces of nature. The integrated and coordinated use of space technologies could play a crucial role in supporting disaster management by providing accurate and timely information. It was therefore of fundamental importance that international coordination in disaster reaction and emergency response should be improved at the global level. An effective way of achieving that was to provide greater access by all countries to space-based services. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) had, therefore, after extensive consultation and analysis, proposed that a programme should be established within the United Nations to provide access to all types of space-based information and services. In addition to providing disaster management support and facilitating capacity-building in developing countries, the programme could extend access to space-based technology solutions across the globe.

42. COPUOS had long since realized that a varied number of space technologies and applications could

solve many of the problems faced by humanity. They could help reduce poverty and prevent infectious diseases and environmental degradation. They could also provide timely information for decision-making in many aspects of economic and social life, regardless of the level of development of the country concerned. They could provide reliable communications where ground networks were not available or had been destroyed.

43. Among the substantive items considered by COPUOS in 2006 had been the implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III); ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes; the work of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Committee at their 2006 sessions; the spin-off benefits of space technology; space and society; space and water; and recommendations of the World Summit on the Information Society.

44. COPUOS, its two Subcommittees and their action teams and working groups had devoted a great deal of time to considering the recommendations of the General Assembly's five-year review of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III), and, in particular, its Plan of Action (A/59/174, sect. VI.B). The Scientific and Technical Committee's Action Team on Disaster Management had been instrumental in achieving consensus on the United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (SPIDER). Its Working Group on Space Debris had developed space debris mitigation guidelines that were being circulated for approval by governments. Its Working Group on the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space had conducted a joint workshop with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on a potential technical safety framework for nuclear power sources in outer space. At its most recent session, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee had hosted an industry symposium on "Synthetic aperture radar mission and their applications", and planned to hold an International Astronautical Federation (IAF)/Committee on Space Research (COSPAR) symposium on "Use of the equatorial orbit for space applications: challenges and opportunities" at its next session. The International Heliophysical Year 2007 would serve to focus attention on the importance of research cooperation in solar-terrestrial physics. The Scientific and Technical Subcommittee had also considered a report on coordination of space-related activities among United Nations entities submitted by the United Nations Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities.

45. The Legal Subcommittee's working group on practices relating to the registration of space objects had continued its work. Its working group on the application of the five United Nations treaties on outer space had developed a document on the Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects. The Legal Subcommittee had also re-established a working group on the definition and delimitation of outer space. It had also attended a symposium organized by the International Institute of Space Law and the European Centre for Space Law on the legal aspects of disaster management and the contribution of space law.

46. The fiftieth session of COPUOS would examine a new agenda item entitled "International cooperation in promoting the use of space-derived geospatial data for sustainable development", whose scope would be more clearly defined over the course of the following two years. A symposium entitled "Space and Forests" had been held at its most recent session.

47. In conclusion, he would be introducing a draft resolution in the Working Group of the Whole of the Fourth Committee covering decisions by the Committee and its two Subcommittees regarding their work for the year 2007.

48. **Ms. Riess** (German Aerospace Center) said that disasters were an increasing challenge, particularly for developing areas. Space-based instruments of Earth observation had the potential to be of enormous benefit in the areas of risk awareness, knowledge management, disaster prevention, and even infrastructure redevelopment. Beyond already existing international mechanisms for coordinating the used of spaced-based information, such as the International Charter on Space and Major Disasters, which had been activated 160 times in the previous year, and the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), there was a clear need for a single global organization to coordinate the application of space-based information to disaster management. The proposed United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (SPIDER) would allow for horizontal networking within the space

community and vertical networking within the disaster relief community. It would serve as a gateway to space information for disaster management support, a bridge to connect the disaster management and space communities, and a facilitator of capacity-building and institutional strengthening, in particular for developing countries. Products of space observation that had already been used in disaster management included aerial photographs of Darfur, and the tsunami and Pakistan earthquake areas. Photographs supplied instant information on damage and access routes for use in disaster management, and could also supply information on the vulnerabilities of particular areas for use in disaster prevention. It was time to establish a United Nations programme that could provide universal access to all countries and relevant regional and international organizations to all types of space-based information and services to support the full disaster management cycle.

49. *Ms. Bolaños-Perez (Guatemala), Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.*

50. **Mr. Camacho** (United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs) said that the resolution entitled "The Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development" adopted by UNISPACE III contained 33 major recommendations forming a core strategy for regional and global action to facilitate the implementation of an integrated, global system to manage natural disaster mitigation, relief and prevention efforts through Earth observation, communications and other space-based services, making use of existing capabilities and filling in gaps in worldwide satellite coverage.

51. In 2001, one of the COPUOS action teams had recommended the establishment of the Disaster Management International Space Coordination Organization (DMISCO); and in 2006, an ad hoc expert group appointed to study the possibility of creating an international entity to provide for coordination and the means of realistically optimizing the effectiveness of space-based services for use in disaster management had proposed the establishment of SPIDER (A/AC.105/C.1/L.285). Austria, China, Germany and India had already made commitments to SPIDER of approximately US$ 860,000 and other member States had agreed to support it once it was operational. In agreeing to establish SPIDER, COPUOS had recommended implementing the Platform as a programme of the Office for Outer Space Affairs administered by its Director, and as an open network of providers of support with offices in Beijing and Bonn (A/61/20). The possibility of having a liaison office in Geneva to enhance coordination with the humanitarian response community should be discussed, and a detailed workplan for the biennium 2008-2009 should be prepared for consideration at the forty-fourth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee in February 2007.

52. **Mr. González** (Chile) said that natural disasters had significant consequences that affected national resources and threatened international security. Natural disasters and climate change posed more threats than terrorism and had a very negative impact on the poorest sectors of society. Information was crucial to disaster management programmes; those countries that did not have adequate information were at a disadvantage. The fatalities caused by hurricanes, earthquakes and the effects of El Niño were particularly striking. It was important to remember that what happened in one part of the planet had a direct bearing on other parts of the planet; and to identify and focus special attention on the most significant threats.

53. **Mr. Brachet** (Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space) said that technological advances should be used to benefit society, protect future generations and prevent natural and industrial disasters. Research should contribute to meeting the needs of society; communications, air, sea and land navigation systems and satellite positioning were useful for observing the environment and for making advance weather predictions.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.